

RAMSGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL ADOPTION

Meeting	Thursday 31st March 2022
Report Author	Josie Sinden and Iain Livingstone
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Ash Ashbee
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Wards:	Central Harbour, Eastcliff, Sir Moses Montefiore.
Previous meeting:	Cabinet 17th March 2022

Executive Summary:

To seek approval for the adoption of the Ramsgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan documents containing locally specific information of the area, following public consultation in November/December 2021.

Recommendation(s):

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and associated documents, as appended to this report, be agreed and adopted by the Council.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

The cost of any actions arising from the Conservation Area Management plan would be accommodated within existing Council budgetary and staffing provisions initially, with any additional need for resources subject to separate processes (for example external funding bids). The adoption of the appraisal does not result in additional income or discernible reduction in income from planning applications in the Conservation area. Therefore the financial impact on the Council is neutral from adopting the appraisal, with the adoption of the management plan potentially creating the opportunity for external funding opportunities.

Legal

Section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') sets out that it is the duty of a Local Planning Authority from time to time to review its Conservation Areas and to determine whether any new areas should be designated as such.

Section 69 (4) of the Act sets out that the designation of any Conservation Area is considered as a local land charge. The Conservation Area Appraisal which is the subject of

this report does not propose any change to existing Conservation Area boundaries and are already recognised as a local land charge.

Section 70 (5) of the Act requires the Local Planning Authority to notify the Secretary of State in regard to the designation of any part of their area as Conservation Area under section 69 (1) or (2) and of any variation or cancellation. Section 70 (8) requires that notification of any designation, variation or cancellation is published in a local newspaper circulating in the local authority area. This will be undertaken following agreement of the Appraisals for adoption.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for conserving and enhancing the historic environment and that in considering the designation of Conservation Areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, ensuring that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest (NPPF paragraph 191). Due consideration has been had to this provision of the NPPF during the production of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

There are no adverse legal implications in taking this forward, and this has been agreed by the Head of Legal Services.

Corporate

The report covers factors which form part of the Council's corporate statement around the Environment, in support for the Thanet Local Plan and the policies therein, and Communities, through partnership working with Historic England, the Ramsgate Heritage Action Zone Programme Board, and community groups and volunteers in Ramsgate.

Whilst the Conservation area appraisal is not formal planning policy as part of the Council's development plan, the consultation has accorded with the principles of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement 2021.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.	
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,	
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	x

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	
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The findings of the Customer impact assessment are as follows:

The adoption of a Conservation Area appraisal has a potential impact on the planning process with regard to the consideration given to new developments and alterations to existing buildings which require planning permission. There may be an impact on two groups that share a protected characteristic, that of age and disability. The impact on the two groups can be mitigated by undertaking discussions with development control officers over the treatment of an individual's protected characteristic in determining planning applications and by providing clear and consistent advice to property owners with regard to proposals that require planning permission involving heritage assets. Otherwise further information on the significance of the Ramsgate conservation area through the appraisal seeks to preserve and/or enhance the areas for the benefit and well-being of local residents, businesses and community and this should not discriminate but be advantageous to all.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Environment
- Communities

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, imposes a statutory duty on local planning authorities to review their areas from time to time to determine which parts of their area are of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and to designate those areas as conservation areas.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the protection of the historic environment as one of the elements of its drive for sustainable development. It states that local planning authorities should maintain a historic environment record which should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 1.3 Historic England guidance suggests that in designating conservation areas the special interest of Conservation Areas should be identified based on detailed analysis of the areas' individual qualities. To illustrate which features are important within an

area Conservation Area Appraisals are prepared for all conservation areas and consulted to the public. These documents provide an evaluation of the 'character' of an area and provide guidance as to what may be acceptable within the conservation area. Once adopted they form a material consideration when considering planning applications within and adjacent to the designation.

2.0 The Current Situation

2.1 Ramsgate was designated a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) in 2017. A HAZ is a Historic England funded 'place-based' initiative providing targeted resources and specialist support, using the historic environment to achieve economic growth and social impact. Historic England has funded a dedicated Programme Manager at TDC for the duration of the HAZ programme and TDC acts as the accountable body for the initiative. TDC sits on the HAZ Programme Board comprising representatives from Thanet District Council, Historic England, the Ramsgate Society, Ramsgate Town Council, Ramsgate Town Team and community members.

2.2 The five year programme aims to stimulate and support economic, social and cultural regeneration by:

- Enabling the heritage of Ramsgate to be better understood, enjoyed, valued and protected
- Working with the local community to increase participation with the historic environment
- Promoting economic development, social and cultural regeneration
- Developing and improving heritage-related capacity and skills in Ramsgate
- Promoting heritage management best practice and raising standards for quality and design

2.3 The Ramsgate HAZ is coming to the end of its five year programme (ending in March 2022). Foundational research into what makes Ramsgate's heritage so unique and special has been achieved during the lifetime of the HAZ including:

- A review of Listed Buildings (9 New Listings, 5 amendments and re-listings, 1 upgrade from Grade II to Grade II*)
- An Informed Conservation publication (Publication of the book 'Ramsgate: The Town and its Seaside Heritage')
- An Historic Area Assessment (A street-by-street gazetteer of historic buildings in Ramsgate)
- An Historic Landscape Characterisation Study (Layers of history, geography, archaeology, transport flows, building developments etc. mapped)
- An Aerial Investigation and Analysis Report (Collation of images to contribute to our understanding of the town - cropmarks, prehistory, military remains etc.)
- A Prehistoric Ramsgate Report (Report on the archaeology of Ramsgate including Neolith causeway enclosures and Bronze age barrows.)
- Photography (Photographic commission of sites and buildings of historic interest.)
- Pulhamite Condition Survey (An assessment of the overall condition of Ramsgate's pulhamite rock gardens, the repair needs and future maintenance

requirements to protect this nationally important rockwork collection for future generations.)

- Pulhamite Repairs (Contractors and a professional adviser were appointed to undertake emergency repairs to the Pulhamite at Albion Place Gardens via successful application to the Historic England Emergency Heritage at Risk Fund.)
- Heritage Schools Programme (Funded by the Department for Education and managed by Historic England, the Heritage Schools Programme is actively working with Ramsgate schools to train and support teachers in using local history and resources to develop heritage projects.)

All of this foundational research will support the Council, local volunteers and residents to address the need, demand, and significance analysis of any future funding bids taken forward for heritage projects within Ramsgate.

- 2.4 The Ramsgate Conservation Area Appraisal project was funded via a successful bid to Historic England for a capacity building grant of £30,000 and is a key project within the HAZ programme. Following the appointment of consultants to draft the appraisal, and a recent public consultation on a draft document, we are presenting the finalised draft of the appraisal to be adopted by Council by the end of March to coincide with the official end of the HAZ programme in March 2022.
- 2.5 Thanet District Council appointed Alan Baxter Ltd in 2021, a leading design and conservation consultancy, to complete the appraisal.
- 2.6 The first Ramsgate conservation area was designated in 1970, with 2020 marking its 50th anniversary. It is the largest conservation area in Thanet and is designated by Thanet District Council because of its distinctive character. It covers most of the town centre, from the listed buildings near the top of the High Street down to the Royal harbour, and spans west to include Pugin's The Grange and east to the Pulhamite-bordered Winterstoke Gardens.
- 2.7 The HAZ project began in 2018 when community volunteers including members of the Ramsgate Heritage and Design Forum and the Ramsgate Society worked with Historic England to assess different areas of the town. Data collated during this volunteer exercise was reviewed by Alan Baxter Ltd who produced a draft document with recommendations.
- 2.8 The appraisal sets out the special historic and architectural significance of Ramsgate's conservation area, and proposals for its future management. It outlines positive areas and those suitable for change, and will be used together with other planning policy documents to inform decisions on future development. It will be another positive legacy of the HAZ scheme to celebrate the area's historic importance whilst acknowledging the benefits of development in the right places.
- 2.9 A breakdown of the structure of the appraisal is as follows-
 - **Part 1: Character Appraisal.** This section provides an assessment of the

special architectural and historic interest of Ramsgate Conservation Area, and the contribution made by individual elements to its special character and appearance.

- **Part 2: Management Plan.** This section provides principles and recommendations to manage change across the conservation area and help to preserve its character and appearance.
- **Part 3: Guidance for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation.** This section offers practical guidance relating to the climate change adaptation of buildings within the conservation area.
- **Part 4: Supporting Information.** This section contains a list of useful sources; the methodology used to carry out this Appraisal; and a glossary of architectural or historic terms used throughout the Appraisal.

2.10 13 character areas were chosen based on their discernibly different character with key aspects being based on their spatial character, architectural and landscape qualities, historical development and the contribution they make to the conservation area. These are:

- Character Area 1: The Royal Harbour
- Character Area 2: Historic Commercial Core
- Character Area 3: East Cliff
- Character Area 4: Spencer Square and Addington Street
- Character Area 5: Mount Albion Estate
- Character Area 6: Liverpool Lawn
- Character Area 7: Grange Road
- Character Area 8: West Cliff Road
- Character Area 9: Vale Square
- Character Area 10: Effingham Road and Environs
- Character Area 11: Upper King Street
- Character Area 12: Chatham Street and Upper High Street
- Character Area 13: Broad Street and Hardres Street

2.11 In addition, Alan Baxter Ltd has prepared an owners' guide, which will be available on the Thanet District Council website, for people living and working in the conservation area. The guide explains what the conservation area protections cover and provides practical advice, including best practice for adapting buildings for climate change and to reduce carbon emissions.

2.12 Following finalisation of the conservation area appraisal, recommendations to assist in the formation of an ongoing action plan, including reviews, further appraisals and helpful guidance has been suggested. This has been broken down into roles of responsibility to further assist in conversations with stakeholders, allocation of resources, priorities and funding opportunities.

In summary, key recommendations include the following-

- Improved awareness of the available national and local guidance highlighted on all the relevant sections of the TDC website
- TDC supported by Local Plan Policy continue to work collaborative to find innovative ways of improving the condition and promoting the sustainable use of the

significant sites outlined.

- Explore the potential use of Local Development Orders as a means of streamlining the planning process. LDOs can teamed with a Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO) to give prior consent for the conversion of complex historic buildings into a variety of uses.
- Explore the potential for Urgent Works Notices underpinned by potential Compulsory Purchase Orders on vacant (or vacant parts) of listed buildings.
- Using the information provided by the appraisal supported by an additional photographic audit, explore the potential for inclusion of relevant properties on the national register and put forward to Historic England for assessment.
- Using the information provided by the appraisal explore and promote the creation of a Local Heritage at Risk register including locally significant buildings, structures, and open space
- Using the information from the appraisal / positive contributors and an additional photographic audit, explore and promote the production of a publicly available list of Non-designated heritage assets including assessment criteria.
- Using the information from the appraisal and an additional photographic audit explore and promote the production of:
 - Local List of Designated Heritage Assets including assessment criteria.
 - Explore potential of relevant open space to be included on the current Thanet List of Local Green Spaces
- Additional GIS data to be made available on the TDC website including:
 - Heritage at Risk, National and Local
 - Non-designated heritage assets
 - Potential Local List of Designated Heritage Assets
- Potential alteration of Conservation area boundaries in 5 separate locations which are outlined to benefit from being included in the Conservation area.

The recommendations of the action plan would provide a framework for potential future Council initiatives in relation to heritage related matters, including funding bids where appropriate, whilst also providing suggestions for other stakeholders/property owners about proposals that could be brought forward by them. These would all be subject to separate consideration by the Council about the availability of resources to carry out these tasks, and whether they align with separate Council priorities/policies, and the Council is not obligated to carry out all of the recommendations in the document.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 As per the Council's Statement of Community Involvement 2021 (<https://www.thanet.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SCI-Adopted-October-2021.pdf>) the Council is committed to involve the community as much as possible in the planning process as local knowledge helps contribute towards meaningful and

appropriate planning policy. The more the community is involved in the planning process, the greater the ownership is of the planning decisions that shape the future of the area. We have consulted the public accordingly on a draft of the Ramsgate Conservation Area Appraisal and local volunteers were involved in the initial survey work to inform the drafting of the appraisal.

- 3.2 The draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan went to formal public consultation for six weeks between 1 November and 13 December 2021 allowing local residents to have their say on the draft documentation. The draft conservation area appraisal document and supporting information was made fully accessible online and at the local library. A public communications campaign was launched to raise awareness of the consultation via a press release and social media. An online public consultation meeting was held on 8 December 2021 to provide local residents with an overview of the appraisal documents and recommendations, with an opportunity to put questions to the consultants who carried out the appraisal and the planning team. 23 people in total attended this meeting.
- 3.3 Historic England held training events on 18 September 2018 and 24 November 2018 to raise awareness of the conservation area appraisal process, and recruited volunteers to be involved with the initial survey work of Ramsgate's character areas. A total of 57 people attended these training sessions. Volunteers came from the Ramsgate Heritage and Design Forum alongside other interested local residents. The appraisal document contains quotations and references from community volunteers to ensure that the voice of residents in the area is reflected throughout the document.
- 3.4 A total of 40 responses were received in response to a six week online public consultation on the draft appraisal document between 1 November and 13 December 2021, with 38 submitted using a google form. The correspondence is appended to this report at Annex 3, with a series of graphs provided at Annex 4 to illustrate the satisfaction of those respondents to 4 particular questions asked about specific sections of the appraisal in the consultation. In summary, the majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied by the content of the character appraisal, management plan, the guidance for climate change adaptation and mitigation, supportive information and the draft conservation area owners guidance. Whilst most of the comments were supportive of the work, the following comments were made raising points of concern/suggestions:
- The appraisal was too long for public consultation.
 - Further extensions to multiple parts of the Ramsgate Conservation area should be considered in the future.
 - Individual sites/issues which have manifested in the local area have affected the Conservation area including graffiti and antisocial behaviour.
 - Points raised about the need for additional resources to maximise potential outcomes of the documents.
 - Potential conflict between climate change principles and preservation of designated heritage assets.

- Suggestions regarding further highways measures within the conservation area.

3.5 The matters raised through the consultation mainly consist of matters for the Council and other bodies to consider within separate processes, for example when determining planning applications, formulating public realm improvement projects or resolving enforcement cases regarding particular locations. The consultation responses did not raise any specific concerns regarding the purpose or principle of the appraisal and associated guidance, and it is not considered that the consultation responses result in any specific alteration to the content of the documents themselves, however the responses should be noted for the use of appraisal/guidance going forward. Requests to expand the Conservation area, or acknowledge the importance of particular non-listed buildings in the Conservation area are covered by the potential outcomes of the management plan (through potential expansion of the boundaries of the conservation area which would be subject to separate consultation, and the inclusion of buildings on a local list).

3.6 The documents and outcome of public consultation was considered by the Council's cabinet on 17th March 2022. It was agreed that the appraisal and management plan be moved for adoption by full Council.

4.0 Summary and Officer Recommendation

4.1 The consultation of the Ramsgate Conservation area appraisal has shown support for the formal adoption by the Council of the appraisal and associated document, which would allow the appraisal to form a material planning consideration in the determination of applications affecting the Ramsgate Conservation area. The recommendations of the action plan also provide a framework for potential future Council initiatives in relation to heritage related matters where resources allow and when considered appropriate. It is recommended that members agreed to adopt the appraisal and associated document for Ramsgate.

5.0 Options

5.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and associated documents, as appended to this report, be agreed and adopted by the Council.

5.2 Do not approve the adoption of the conservation area appraisal

5.3 Members propose an alternative motion.

Contact Officer: Josie Sinden, Senior Conservation Officer
Iain Livingstone, Planning Applications Manager
Reporting to: Bob Porter, Director of Housing and Planning

Annex List

Annex 1: Draft Ramsgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Annex 2: Householder Guidance

Annex 3: Consultation responses

Annex 4: Consultation results

Background Papers

Historic England Advice Note 1 - Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>

Corporate Consultation

Finance: *Chris Blundell, Director of Finance*

Legal: *Estelle Culligan, Director of Legal*